

I think I know the timbre and the temper of the youth of Zion, and when the question is asked: "Will you go forth now to build up Zion?" the affirmative roar of assent will be so great that the earth will tremble at its power and beauty. And in power you will teach salvation to the world—and in giving your lives to this service you will cleanse the world from its bath of blood and justify the sacrifice to liberty of your fallen comrades.

God grant you the faith and courage to do it I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

One of the parables of our Savior reads as follows:

. . . The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Matt. 13:45-46.)

#### REVERSING THE PARABLE REGARDING THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

We have always felt that that merchant was an extremely wise man, because he was willing to give up all that he possessed in order to acquire the pearl of great price. But let me ask you, what would you have thought of that merchant had the parable been reversed and he had given up the pearl of great price in exchange for something of little or no value?

We have some among us who are doing that very thing. In their own lives they reverse the parable of the Lord and they give up the pearl of great price for a fleeting fancy. They actually sell their birthright in the kingdom of God for less than a mess of pottage.

From time to time in the Church section of *The Deseret News*—which section I do recommend to all of you as one of the finest publications that you can have in your home—from time to time that publication carries a list of names of individuals who have been excommunicated from this Church. These excommunicants at one time were all members of the kingdom of God, and at one time they all possessed the pearl of great price. But each one of them has reversed that parable in his own life and has given up the pearl of great price with all its values and with all its blessings. What a pity! What a tragedy!

#### FALSE TEACHERS DECEIVE MANY

How do people do such a thing as this? One of the reasons people apostatize from this Church is that they have failed to heed the warning of the scriptures against listening to false teachers who raise their voices in our midst. In spite of the fact that these warnings of the scriptures are crystal clear, many of our people fail to heed them.

Note how clear they are. Peter said:

... there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, And many shall follow their pernicious ways. (II Peter 2:1-2.)

Jesus said, "... Take heed that no man deceive you, For many shall come in my name ... and shall deceive many," (Matt. 24:4-5) and again the Lord said, "... many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many," (Matt. 24:11) and once again the Lord said, and keep in mind that when he said this he was speaking to members of the Church who were already in possession of the pearl of great price:

... if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not; For in those days there shall also arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs, and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect who are the elect according to the covenant. (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 1:21-22.)

Who are the elect according to the covenant? They are those persons who have entered into the new and everlasting covenant by accepting membership in this Church.

When the Apostle John was speaking of the false teachers in his day he branded them as antichrists. Said he, "... even now are there many antichrists: ... They went out from us." (I John 2:18-19.) In other words they had been members of the Church, and they had been led into paths of apostasy because of false religious notions.

They went out from us, ... for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (I John 2:19.)

How do these false teachers lead people astray? They do so by attacking the fundamental doctrines of the Church. They attack the Authorities of the Church. They attack the teachings of the Authorities. They seek to develop doctrinal disputes among the people to undermine their faith, and they lead people into apostasy when they do such things as that. Very often false teachers who have come among us endeavor to justify their position by claiming to have received some revelation or dream directing them, they say, in the paths which they tread.

There were disputes anciently among the Jews, over the doctrines of the church, and these disputes led people to apostasy. There were disputes among the ancient Nephites likewise, just as there are disputes among some of our people today, disputes, let me remind you, which lead to apostasy and excommunication from the Church.

In the days of the Savior, or rather before he appeared among the Nephites, there were many doctrinal disputes among the Nephites. Some of those who stirred up the hearts of the people said that there was no Christ. They denied his very existence. When

the righteous Nephites looked forward to the coming of the Lord, these false teachers declared that he would not come, because he did not so much as exist; and so, when finally Jesus did make his appearance among the Nephites, after his resurrection on the other continent, he stood before them, and settled then and there the dispute over whether or not he existed. He stood before the multitude, and invited them to come up, one by one, and examine his body, his resurrected body. He invited them to feel his hands and feet and to thrust their hands into his side, to feel the imprints of the crucifixion; and after they had all come up and found that he was the Christ, they fell down and worshipped him.

Then he began to preach the gospel to those Nephites and the very first thing that he said to them in beginning his preaching was this:

... there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been. For verily, I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, . . . and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend . . . one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away. (III Nephi 11:28-30.)

Giving a similar warning to the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said:

... Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them. (D. & C. 10:63.)

So, Latter-day Saints, beware of false teachers. When men come among you and begin to preach doctrines unto you which tend to destroy your confidence in the holy scriptures, when men come among you, as they are now coming, declaring to you that the appointment of George Albert Smith as President of this Church is not valid, because they say this Church should only have seven presidents and no more, when people come among you declaring that Christ is not divine, or when they come among you advocating the so-called practice of plural marriage, contrary to the teachings of this Church and contrary to the law of the land, when they come among you declaring that you can enter into domestic relations with another man or another woman without committing adultery, when you do not have a marriage bond which is recognized as legal by the law of this land, or when people come among you declaring that the Church is out of order, because we are at the present time not practicing the United Order, or when a man comes among you declaring that the Church is off the track and that he is one mighty and strong sent to set the Church in order, or when anyone comes and tells you that temple marriage is just a fad and that it has no relationship to your exaltation in the kingdom of God, or when someone comes to you, as one group is now doing, preaching that reincarnation is a

Christian doctrine, or when men come to you declaring that predestination is one of the doctrines of the gospel, declaring that one group of the Saints is predestined to go to one degree of glory and another group of the Saints is predestined to go to another degree of glory, or when they come among you declaring that they have had dreams and visions about some get-rich-quick scheme by which they are going to save the Church financially in some period of distress, or when they come to you and declare that the method of administering the sacrament of the Lord's supper is to be changed, contrary to all the teachings of the scriptures, or when they come to you and say you can serve two masters, that you can serve the Church and also one of these wild-cat cults that are starting up, when you hear teachings of this kind you remember that such doctrines cause dissention among the people, that they cause disputes which lead to apostasy and that the Lord condemned disputes of that kind. When you have persons come to you teaching doctrines of this kind, remember also the words of the Savior when he said:

. . . neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine. . . . for verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men. (III Nephi 11:28-29.)

Remember, too, the Savior told the Prophet Joseph Smith that it is Satan who "doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of doctrine," and that when individuals put themselves in the hands of Satan in doing these things "they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them."

#### SAFETY IN FOLLOWING COUNSEL OF LEADERS OF THE CHURCH

Surely the Latter-day Saints, of all people, should be on their guard against false doctrines. Have we forgotten the warning that was given to us by the Savior, as he appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the sacred grove during that first vision? Have we forgotten that there the Savior declared that man-made religious doctrines are an abomination in his sight?

The Lord has foreseen the fact that the Saints would need protection against false teachers, and he foresaw the need of setting safeguards in the Church to give them that protection.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians clearly explained what these safeguards are, and he gave us the reason the Lord established these safeguards. If you will remember your reading of the fourth chapter of Ephesians, you will recall that he outlined the organization of the Church, and as part of that organization he declared that in the Church there were to be some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. The reasons he said these officers were set in the Church were: First, for the perfecting of the Saints—remember that the Savior had commanded us to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Second, they were set in the

Church for the work of the ministry; third, for the edifying or the instruction of the membership of the Church; fourth, to help us to come to a unity of the faith; fifth, to help us to obtain a knowledge of the Sons of God; sixth, to help us to achieve the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And then he gave us a seventh reason, telling us that the Lord put apostles and prophets and pastors and teachers in this Church—and mark these words carefully—

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Eph. 4:14.)

So if you really desire to avoid deceptions, if you really desire to do that which is right and proper, then you take advantage of the safeguard that the Lord has given you in the organization of this Church. And you remember that if you will follow the teachings of your inspired prophets, seers, and revelators, of your apostles, of your pastors and teachers, your bishops and your stake presidents, you won't need to wonder whether or not such and such a doctrine is a deception, whether it is false or whether it is true, because those authorized servants of the Lord will lead you into paths of righteousness, and they will keep you on the right track.

Salvation comes not by being tossed about by every wind of doctrine but by learning the truth as it is taught by the inspired, authorized leaders of the Church, and then having learned that truth, by living up to it and enduring in faithfulness unto the very end.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. (Matt. 7:21.)

If you would know the will of the Lord, so that you may obtain your salvation, then obtain your knowledge of the will of the Lord from his authorized servants whom he has set in this Church. That we may have the common sense to do this, I earnestly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **President George Albert Smith:**

We have had a wonderful day in the worship of the Lord. We have been at peace with ourselves and with everybody else today and have had a lovely time.

Tonight there will be a Priesthood meeting held in this building at 7 o'clock, the services of which will not be broadcast.

Members of the Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "Thanks to Thee, O Lord," by Handel.

The closing prayer will be offered by President James D. Hoggan of the Burley Stake, after which this Conference will stand adjourned until 7 o'clock tonight. As I have already stated, that will be a Priesthood meeting.

The sessions at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. tomorrow will be broadcast. At the morning session everyone should be in his seat